

Approved - Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee
September 15, 2010
Mid-County Regional Services – 2424 Reedie Drive Wheaton, MD 20902

Members Present, Gregory Baker; Eleanor Duckett; Jonathan Fink, Manuel Hidalgo, Chelsea Johnson, Larysa Kurylas, Zoe Lefkowitz, Chris Lindsay, Diane Lynne, Leslie McDermott, James Mensah, Susan Petersen, Erin Roberts, Stewart Tsao, and Fran Ware

Members Absent: Ciliny Alce, Melissa Brown, Maureen Carrington, Regina Dull, Sara Lappano, Thomas Martin, Patrick Naehu, Bob Schilke, Dave Taghipour

County Staff Present: David Dise, Rob Klein, Pete McGinnity, and Sharon Lasswell

Guest Speakers: Robert Wulff, SVP and Vince Burke for BF Saul; Ellen Bogage and Dana Davidson for Chesapeake Public Strategies; Steve Simon for Simon Public Relations; Tom Maskey for Potomac Development Group; Sandra Tallant, M-NCPPC

Guests: Alison Bryant with the Gazette; Taylor Brown with Wheaton Patch; Elizabeth Chaisson with GreenWheaton; and Dan Alfandre.

Meeting Called to Order by Chairperson Greg Baker at 7:04 p.m.

Approval of Minutes – Motion to approve the July minutes made by Ms. Lefkowitz and seconded by Mr. Martin. All were in favor - minutes were approved.

Mr. Baker provided the WRAC members with a list of their accomplishments (attached) over the past year, which included various initiatives associated with Redevelopment Advocacy; County Executive Dialogue and Advisement; Relationship Building with Local, State & Federal Officials; Engagement of Development Community Representatives; Committee Restructuring & Growth and Community & Neighborhood Outreach.

Nomination Process for WRAC officers – The Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee runs from September to August. The previous Chair/Vice Chair continue until the elections in October. Nominations for the new Chair and Vice-Chair are solicited at the September meeting. The Chair may serve two terms. Mr. Baker is eligible and willing to serve another term.

ACTION – Mr. Baker was nominated for Chair by Ms. Roberts and the nomination was seconded by Ms. Lefkowitz. There were no nominations at this time for Vice-Chair. Nominations will remain open until September 24. Additional nominations should be forwarded to Mr. McGinnity. A vote for Chair and Vice-Chair will be held at the October meeting.

Request for Qualifications - Mr. Dise summarized the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process that led to the selection of the B. F. Saul Company Team. The Goals presented in the RFQ came largely from the goals established by WRAC. The RFQ forms the basis for the “Letter of Intent” and the “General Development Agreement” which formalize the expectations and responsibilities of the parties (B.F. Saul Team, County, WMATA) over the coming years. Mr. Dise explained there

were specific qualification criteria the County and WMATA were looking for in a development team: experience and past performance; capacity; conceptual approach and methodology; visioning; the ability to retain business; and financial capability and commitment as a developer. Mr. Dise introduced the team: B. F. Saul Company; Torti Gallas and Partners; Loiederman Soltesz Associates; Potomac Development Group, Chesapeake Public Strategies; Simon Public Relations; and, Cassidy Turley. The team will be working on a conceptual plan, not a building design. This process will take approximately six months. The team will look at site and access analysis and transportation and pedestrian access as well as perform stakeholder outreach. They will also look at land aggregation, user tenant outreach, financial planning etc. The County will look to WRAC to use their strategy and approach for working with and their engagement with the team as advisors. The County will be preparing a Project Description Form (PDF) requesting appropriation of funds in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to begin staff work and other analysis. A shortened URL will be available to obtain information about the redevelopment of Wheaton. You will find the minutes, agendas, reports, presentations press releases etc. at this easy to find web site <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Wheatonredev>.

B. F. Saul Company – Bob Wulff stated that B.F. Saul Company was selected for very specific parcels – the WMATA Property; the bus bays; the Mid-County Regional Center site; and Montgomery County Parking Lots 13 and 34. There may be a need to assemble other parcels that are privately owned to make a package that works and can be developed. Over the next six months they will discuss how best to use that land.

The team brings the following experience to the project: high-quality projects; transit oriented development; mixed-use development; high-pedestrian traffic connectivity and emphasize street level activity; support land assemblage for density sufficient to justify development costs; quality public open space; housing mix that ensure inclusion for all Wheaton residents; and employ smart growth principles and construct LEED-certified buildings. The Team has experience in public/private partnerships; intrinsic knowledge of “Smart Growth” and “Green Development”; knowledge of County approval process; and experience in land assemblage. As part of the project, they are looking at an office market for Wheaton.

Some of their projects include the Kennedy-Warren Apartments built in 1931; their Headquarters located in a mixed-use office on Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda; a residential town center in Dayton, Ohio; and Bethesda Row in Bethesda.

The Clarendon Center in Arlington is another mixed-use office project and one that has similarities to Wheaton. The project required land aggregation and the displacement of several long-term tenants. Certain spaces were set aside for those tenants to come back to once the project was completed, at slightly subsidized rents. It was difficult for some of the tenants to find temporary space during the two-year construction period and this was a challenge. The Saul Team wants to involve local businesses. Wheaton also shares some similarities to Silver Spring in terms of challenges and the Saul Team is prepared and capable of handling them.

Public Engagement Plan (PEP) - Ms. Bogage stressed the importance of being inclusive to all sectors in the community, keeping people informed and involved and that they have the knowledge they need about the process and what is occurring. They will look at the best ways to communicate with the diverse community – is it blogs, HOA newsletters, list serves, etc. WRAC’s role will be to serve as liaison between Saul Team & constituents to assist the Saul Team to anticipate and respond to community issues; act in advisory capacity to public engagement process; provide guidance on

optimal methods of community outreach and provide information on stakeholder groups and various individuals they should meet with. The Saul Team will have a presence on the County's website or create their own to keep people abreast of what is happening regarding the redevelopment of downtown Wheaton.

The centerpiece of the plan will be the community workshops. There are two workshops planned. The first will be a "listening" workshop with all the identified stakeholders to learn the desires and needs of the community, followed by individual meetings with the various groups and individuals to discuss in more detail the needs and desires for Wheaton. This process will go on for several months. All the information obtained at the first community meeting will be reviewed and used to draft a Concept Plan to facilitate discussion at the second community meeting to achieve consensus of the Plan among community stakeholders.

Sector Plan Update (M-NCPPC) - Ms. Tallant provided a brief update on the status of the Staff Draft of the Sector Plan. There was a great deal of support for the Plan at the recent public hearing. The upcoming work sessions are an opportunity for the Planning Board to take the staff's work, input gathered from the community, as well as the Planning Board's ideas, and turn it into a Planning Board Draft, which is the recommendation that will go to the County Council. *October 7* will be the first work session and will deal with the vision, jobs, housing balance, and transportation capacity. *October 28* will be the second work session and will involve discussion on land-use and zoning which is the implementation of the vision, then the individual districts and the individual properties within those districts. They will be looking at specific zoning, transportation proposals and environmental issues and other community facilities. On *November 18*, the Urban Design Guidelines will be presented. Work session packets are posted on the website in advance of each work session.

Following the work sessions, staff will revise the report at the direction of the Planning Board. The Plan should be presented to the County Council in early 2011. As part of that process, sixty-days are allotted to the County Executive (Department of General Services) for review of the Plan and to conduct Economic Analysis. Subsequently, the Plan is forwarded to the County Council, which will hold additional public hearings and review through its PHED Committee. PHED will make recommendations regarding the Plan to the full County Council and ultimately the Council will vote on it.

"Wheaton Walkabouts" with Planning Director, Rollin Stanley - The Planning Director, Division Chief and planning staff have participated in several Wheaton "walkabouts" in downtown Wheaton. Community Associations, businesses, or groups etc. can arrange a walkabout with the Planning Director by contacting his office.

Redevelopment Report - Mr. Klein discussed the following:

- COSTCO announced over the summer that they are coming to Westfield Mall. They will pursue a fueling station through the Special Exception process.
- BB&T Bank's Development Plan Amendment is scheduled to go before the Planning Board on September 16th. Although the Planning Board staff recommends denial, WRAC and WUDAC support the plan amendment. Mr. Baker will testify on behalf of WRAC at the public hearing on the 16th.

- Safeway is going to the Planning Board on October 28th for Site Plan approval. Safeway will provide an update to the Project Review Subcommittee and WRAC at their respective October meetings.
- Mid-County Regional Services Center Director Natalie Cantor coordinated with the County Dept. of Transportation and the State Highway Administration for the placement of a median fence on Georgia Avenue between Reddie Drive and Price Avenue for pedestrian safety.

A few members expressed concern that a fence in the median on Georgia Avenue could create a pedestrian safety issue and would cater to a car oriented environment and not pedestrians. Mr. Klein advised that an objective of the RFQ (B.F. Saul project), is pedestrian orientation and pedestrian safety. He indicated a method that works well in Bethesda is raised medians for reducing pedestrian mid-block crossings. Mr. Baker indicated this issue might be something the Project Review Subcommittee could look into.

Subcommittee Reports

Planning & Visioning – Mr. Klein advised that the subcommittee will meet on October 4th and will be reviewing the Planning Board Work Session Packet.

Project Review – Ms. Petersen advised that the subcommittee is considering the preparation of a matrix to assist them with the various projects. Mr. Dise mentioned the Safeway project will include nearly a million dollars in amenities. The County will meet with Planning staff next week to discuss the amenities and how best to ensure the million dollars in amenities benefits Wheaton and the redevelopment. The subcommittee will also discuss the Safeway amenities at their upcoming meeting.

Economic Development – Mr. McGinnity advised that the subcommittee would focus on community outreach to identify the needs and expectations in the surrounding communities. They are looking into the different types of neighborhood associations. Mr. Baker asked the members to think about how they want to engage the redevelopment process with B.F. Saul and their team so they can discuss it at the October WRAC meeting. The subcommittee will be working with the B. F. Saul Team on outreach. Mr. Baker asked the Project Review and Economic Development subcommittees to compile a list of groups we should be engaging in the broader Wheaton community and bring that list back to the October meeting for a full group discussion. Ultimately, Mr. Baker said we need a comprehensive list of the vital civic and homeowner associations (HOA's) in the area and we need to map that out. Dealing with the small businesses, in light of all the redevelopment that is pending, is another important issue for the Economic Development Subcommittee.

GreenWheaton – by Elizabeth Chaisson – The group has not met since July as they took the Month of August off. The first “Green Drinks” was held at the Royal Mile Pub. The Pub was the first sponsor of the “Rain Garden” and pledged \$250 toward this year’s maintenance. It takes about \$500 a year to maintain the rain garden. GreenWheaton is looking for donations or pledges. Green Drinks is an international organization of individuals that are interested in environmental issues all over the world that after a while is a list serve.

Meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m..

Please note: your name will become public information, recorded in the minutes of this WRAC Committee meeting, which may be photocopied and disseminated to various groups, and may appear on the internet and become retrievable by internet search engines.”

Attachment

WRAC Accomplishments - September 2009 – August 2010

WRAC had a busy and productive year accomplishing various initiatives associated with:

- Redevelopment Advocacy
- County Executive Dialogue and Advisement
- Relationship Building with Local, State & Federal Officials
- Engagement of Development Community Representatives
- Committee Restructuring & Growth
- Community & Neighborhood Outreach

Redevelopment Advocacy:

Planning Board

- Sent a letter of support for the Wheaton CBD Sector Plan Preliminary Recommendations
- Sent a letter to the Planning Board in support of the Safeway project
- Sent a letter stating WRAC's support for rezoning of Washington Properties' project
- Sent a letter stating WRAC's support of the BB&T Bank project
- Sent a letter opposing ZTA 10-07 that would negatively affect redevelopment of the First Baptist Church of Wheaton site
- Sent a letter supporting and requesting certain changes to the Staff Draft of the Wheaton CBD Sector Plan
- Delivered 6 in-person public testimonials to Planning Board

County Council

- Sent a letter supporting a resolution to establish a Recovery Zone Designation
- Sent a letter in support of Costco
- Sent a letter in support of the ZTA 10-04 to enable the Costco gas station
- Provided in-person testimony supporting ZTA 10-04
- Sent a letter opposing ZTA 10-07 that would negatively affect redevelopment of the First Baptist Church of Wheaton site
- Provided in-person testimony opposing ZTA-10-07

Misc. Entities

- Wrote a letter for the Division of Transit expressing WRAC's concerns on the budget cuts affecting Wheaton Bus Routes
- Sent a letter to the Arts and Humanities Council expressing appreciation for a \$4,000 donation to preserve a key piece of public art in Wheaton (transferred from Gilcrest Center to Triangle Ln.- Georgia Ave. Pedestrian Walkway)

County Executive Dialogue and Advisement:

- Convened a special meeting and presented to the County Executive (and County Council) on Wheaton redevelopment issues
- Sent a letter to the County Executive in support of Enterprise Zone Bill MC 2-10
- Sent a letter encouraging support of Maryland HB 861
- Forwarded WRAC's FY-11 Operating Budget priorities to the County Executive
- Provided in-person input to the County Executive regarding the Operating Budget and key redevelopment priorities

Relationship Building with Local, State, and Federal Officials:

- Held a special meeting with 7 local and 6 State & Federal elected officials to discuss Wheaton redevelopment topics
- Established a process to periodically brief key officials on Wheaton redevelopment
- WRAC Chair attended Governor's signing of HB 861 at State Capitol

Engagement of Development Community Representatives:

- Entertained 5 presentations and dialogues with development team officials representing:
 - Safeway project
 - Washington Properties project
 - BB&T project
 - Westfield
 - Costco

Committee Growth & Structure:

- Consolidated from 5 subcommittees into 3: Planning & Visioning, Economic Development, and Project Review
- Established a new process whereby issues are brought before the full WRAC committee and later delegated to subcommittees by majority vote OR by request or delegation of the WRAC Chair
- Voted to amend the Ground Rules to allow flexibility for subcommittee meetings to be held in alternate locations
- Conducted a comprehensive outreach effort to recruit new members, and diversify the committee in terms of key demographics; WRAC expanded to 25, representing different areas, businesses, property types, ethnicities, cultures, and age groups

Community & Neighborhood Outreach:

- Held a special meeting involving Kensington Heights Civic Association members and Costco officials to discuss the Costco project and proposed gas station
- Had a presence and official booth at the Taste of Wheaton festival
- Conducted community outreach, including engaging the Gazette, in a campaign to expand and diversify the committee membership